

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 2/3/2015	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Lisa Howe/781-5011	
(4) SUBJECT Thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions for the Board's review of the continuing need for the March 11, 2014 proclamation of local emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8630. All Districts.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board receive the thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions establishing the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) N/A	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? N/A
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ____ ) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. ____ )			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5 Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/> N/A    Date: <u>3/11/14, 4/8/14, 5/6/14, 6/3/14,</u> <u>6/17/14, 7/15/14, 8/12/14, 9/9/14, 10/7/14,</u> <u>11/4/14, 12/2/14, 12/16/14, 1/6/15</u>	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW Guy Savage			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts			

# County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Administrative Office / Lisa Howe/781-5011

DATE: 2/3/2015

SUBJECT: Thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions for the Board's review of the continuing need for the March 11, 2014 proclamation of local emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8630. All Districts.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board receive the thirty-day update on current drought conditions and related management actions establishing the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Background**

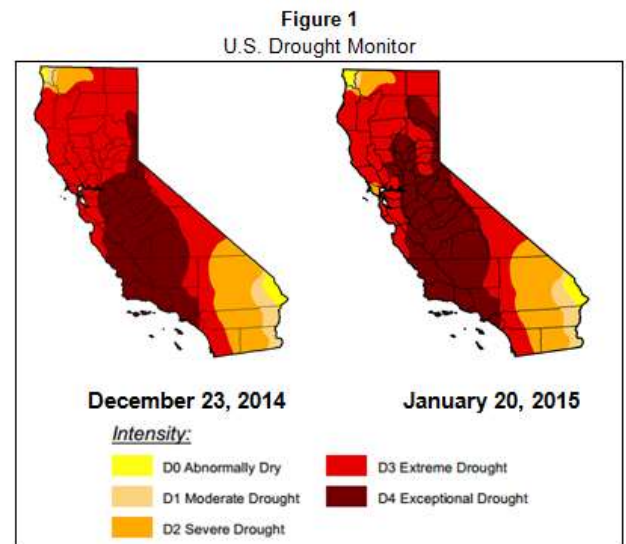
On March 11, 2014, the Board adopted a resolution proclaiming a local emergency due to drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County. Section 8630 of the California Government Code and County Code Chapter 2.80.070 (2) require that the Board of Supervisors review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every 30 days until such emergency is terminated. The Board also directed staff to return every 30 days to provide an update on the status of actions by the Drought Task Force, including a report on the analysis regarding local water conditions, local responses, conservation and outreach projects, and the State Water Project.

The last drought update was on January 3, 2015. This is the thirteenth update since the proclamation of a local emergency on March 11, 2014. This month's drought update is on the consent agenda as drought conditions remain relatively unchanged and there were no major actions requiring further discussion that have occurred since the last update.

The Drought Task Force continues to meet regularly to coordinate drought monitoring, impact assessments, responses to emergency health and safety, and public communication and outreach. The task force prepared the Monthly Drought Update (Attachment 1) to inform the Board on current drought conditions and related management actions. Current drought conditions confirm the need to continue the proclamation of local emergency.

### **Current Conditions**

California has received little precipitation since the early December storms. As a result, much of the state remains in a severe drought. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report released January 22, 2015, indicates San Luis Obispo County remains at the D4 – Exceptional Drought intensity rating (Attachment 2). Approximately 94% of California is at a level D2 Severe Drought or worse with 39% of the state at a D4 intensity level. Due to the recent dry spell throughout the state, the percentage of the state in a D4 intensity level increased from 32% since the last update. Figure 1 shows



how the percentages of intensity levels have changed over the past month.

County rainfall totals for the 2014-15 water year (July 2014 – June 2015) range from 26-47% of average annual rainfall totals. See Attachment 3 for additional information. Reservoir levels remain significantly lower than the average percentage capacity for this time of year including: Nacimiento 23% (86,760 acre feet); Whale Rock 45% (17,568 acre feet); Lopez 41% (20,300 acre feet); and Salinas 19% (4,609 acre feet) of capacity (Attachment 4).

### **Winter Outlook**

The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center indicates a 50-60% probability that El Niño conditions will develop during the next two months. However, prediction suggests that if El Niño develops this winter, it will be a weak El Niño event, which has little historical correlation to increased rain and snow. The Winter Precipitation Outlook favors greater than 33% chance of above average rainfall for Southern California, while the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook has worsened and is now calling for the drought to persist or intensify (Attachment 5).

While the December storms provided a meaningful uptick in many of the state's reservoirs the lack of precipitation since those storms means that California remains firmly in a drought. It would take several months of well above normal precipitation to erase the precipitation deficit which has accrued during the last 3 years. Refilling reservoirs and rebuilding the snowpack will require a series of additional, colder storms through January, February, and March, and recharging underground aquifers will need even more precipitation and time. The severe drought is unlikely to abate much in the long term.

### **Impacts**

#### Agricultural Conditions

In 2014, UC Cooperative Extension delivered monthly surveys to a limited number of key leaders in the agricultural community. In order to confirm the 2014 monthly survey results from a broader cross-section of the agricultural community, a voluntary drought impact question was included as part of the yearly crop report survey from the Agricultural Commissioner's office. To date, 93 crop report surveys have been returned to the Ag Commissioner's office. So far, responses in the crop report survey have generally confirmed responses from key stakeholders, many indicating loss of production and income. Tree and vine growers report plant dieback and death in some commodities, including avocados and walnuts. Avocado growers report stumping trees because of lack of water and hauling water to irrigate trees. Citrus and avocado growers reported increased irrigation requirements because of lack of rainfall, and increased irrigation costs. Production was lower due to reduced crop and smaller fruit. Grain and hay producers reported grazing planted acreage due to poor growth or idling ground due to lack of water. Livestock producers report selling animals, buying feed and hauling water.

#### Fire Conditions

Mild winter weather and shorter days have continued to minimize the fire danger overall due to an increase in cool, humid conditions. CAL FIRE continues to monitor the drought situation and prepare for the wildfire season ahead while maintaining staffing that meets the current threat.

#### Domestic Wells

The Governor's Drought Task Force created an online intake form for use by local, state, or tribal and federal agencies to document domestic water issues. Data collected is considered confidential and access is restricted. Individuals with domestic water issues are encouraged to contact County Environmental Health at (805) 781-5544.

In addition, the County Drought Task Force created a supplemental anonymous survey. The survey does not ask for any identifying information and is intended to support our request for federal disaster assistance for individuals. Individuals who wish to remain anonymous are encouraged to complete the supplemental survey online at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought\\_Update](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/admin/Drought_Update) or by phone by calling (805) 781-5011.

To date, the County has received 80 responses to the supplemental survey. Of the 80 respondents, 34% report that one or more wells have gone dry and 12% are trucking in water. It is important to note that the survey is voluntary and as a result, responses are not representative of the county population.

#### Economic Conditions

The San Luis Obispo County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) continues to gather information on local drought-related job impacts. The WIB's Drought Business Impact survey is available at <http://sloworkforce.com/drought-survey/>. Though

the WIB is hearing that there are impacts, the County does not have any "reportable" impacts due to the State's requirements for reporting (i.e. specific business name, address, etc.).

The County continues to identify assistance programs to help rural communities, businesses and individuals impacted by California's ongoing drought conditions. Information regarding drought assistance for rural homeowners has been placed on the County Drought Conditions and Water Conservation webpage. Rural Development, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), delivers a number of programs to help rural communities, businesses and individuals impacted by California's ongoing drought conditions.

### **Conservation Efforts**

#### **County Facilities and Parks Usage**

General Services continues to lead water conservation efforts at County facilities. To date, staff has retrofitted 44 buildings with low-flow fixtures, saving an estimated 4,500 gallons per week. In addition, staff replaced a leaking water line, which was approximately 18 inches below the surface. The new water line saved 16,000 gallons of water through leak repair.

### **Drought Contingency Planning**

The Public Health Department, the Public Works Department, and CAL FIRE/County Fire continue to develop plans to ensure there is adequate supply of water for firefighting and domestic water use in the event that a community does not have enough water. Water availability information from both small and large public water systems has been categorized into three categories; Watch, Vulnerable, and Critical. The information has been placed into a GIS mapping layer for contingency planning.

### **Emergency Actions**

The proclamation continues to provide authority for unforeseen needed actions. As also noted, proclamation provides a statement to State and Federal agencies of the seriousness of the County's situation.

The County has taken no new emergency actions specific to the drought in this reporting period.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Board review and receive the attached update. The update highlights the existence of continuing drought conditions in San Luis Obispo County. Review of this update by the Board fulfills the Board's duty to review the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency due to the existence of drought conditions pursuant to Government Code section 8630. No other Board action is necessary.

Note: Any regulations issued because of the local drought emergency would be subject to Board approval. The local emergency proclamation adopted by the Board on March 11, 2014, will remain in effect until terminated by your Board.

### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

At the onset of the Governor's declaration and under the direction of the County Administrative Officer, a County Drought Task Force was formed. The Drought Task Force is comprised of multiple County departments, including: the Administrative Office, Office of Emergency Services, Public Works Department, General Services, County Parks, County Fire (CAL FIRE), Agricultural Commissioner, Planning and Building, Farm Advisor, Health Agency, and County Counsel. All member departments provided input for this report.

County OES continues to be in regular contact with Cal OES to receive and provide situation status information.

The Public Works Department continues to coordinate with local water purveyors and cities.

Public Health is coordinating with relevant State agencies, including the State California Department of Public Health and Emergency Medical Services Authority Health Coordination Center.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The long-term financial impact on the local economy, including the demand on County and other legal agency services, cannot be forecast at this time. The County continues to track drought-related costs. As of January 21, 2015, tracked

labor costs associated with the drought total \$306,396.75.

## **RESULTS**

Accepting the update prepared by the Drought Task Force, which establishes the existence of conditions of drought, confirms the need to continue the proclamation of a local emergency. Maintaining the proclamation of local emergency will continue to allow for the Public Works Department and other agencies to take immediate actions needed by allowing temporary reduction of certain regulatory and purchasing requirements. This will also permit County staff to assist in drought-related work and tasks outside their normal scope of duties in the capacity of Disaster Service Workers under Government Code section 3100. In addition, acceptance of the update from the Drought Task Force confirms the continuing existence of severe drought conditions and will also serve as notice to the State of our dire conditions and a reminder to all of the serious drought conditions facing the County and State.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Attachment 1 - Monthly Drought Update
2. Attachment 2 - U.S. Drought Monitor
3. Attachment 3 - Rainfall and Reservoir Data
4. Attachment 4 - Local Reservoir Conditions
5. Attachment 5 - Seasonal Drought Outlook